

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BONN 00303 070035Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----089349 070238Z /72

R 061949Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4572

S E C R E T BONN 00303

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, GW
SUBJECT: MINISTER OF STATE WISCHNEWSKI COMMENTS ON
COMING CABINET CHANGES IN FRG

1. AT LUNCH JANUARY 5, MINISTER OF STATE WISCHNEWSKI
IN CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE SAID THAT THERE WILL BE SOME
CHANGES IN THE FRG CABINET DURING THE FIRST HALF OF
1978. MINISTER OF HOUSING RAVENS WILL BE SENT TO
HANNOVER TO HEAD SPD TICKET THERE IN LAND ELECTIONS;
ALSO WISCHNEWSKI HINTED RATHER BROADLY THAT HE EXPECTED
FRAU SCHLEI, MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ALSO
WOULD BE REPLACED. HE REMARKED THAT WHILE SHE IS
CAPABLE AND ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, SHE IS OVERLY EMOTIONAL
AND HAS NOT ALWAYS SHOWN GOOD JUDGMENT IN HANDLING HER
JOB.

2. WISCHNEWSKI SAID THAT BIG QUESTION IN CONNECTION
WITH CABINET CHANGES RELATED TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE
LEBER. HE INDICATED THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE
DISCUSSION ON THIS SUBJECT AND THAT THE MATTER WAS
STILL OPEN; HOWEVER, FROM WISCHNEWSKI'S COMMENTS, I
GATHER THAT HE EXPECTS LEBER TO BE LEAVING.

3. WISCHNEWSKI STRESSED THE HIGH REGARD IN WHICH LEBER
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IS HELD BY THE CHANCELLOR AND MOST ELEMENTS OF THE
PARTY AND HE CITED THE OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF
LEBER IN HIS LONG PERIOD OF SERVICE IN THE MINISTRY
OF DEFENSE. HOWEVER, HIS "RESERVE OF NERVES" IS AT
A LOW POINT AND THERE IS A GOOD DEAL OF UNHAPPINESS
AT THE MANNER IN WHICH LEBER HAD HANDLED HIS PRESS
CONFERENCE IN DECEMBER AFTER THE REVELATIONS CONCERNING

THE LUTZE SPY CASE. WISCHNEWSKI SAID THAT LEBER AT
PRESENT DOES NOT WISH TO LEAVE HIS POST AND THE
CHANCELLOR WILL NOT FORCE HIM TO DO SO. HOWEVER, WISCHNEWSKI
CLEARLY HINTED AT THE POSSIBILITY, IF NOT PROBABILITY,
THAT LEBER WOULD LEAVE HIS POST IN A FEW MONTHS TIME.

4. WHEN I ASKED WHO WOULD REPLACE LEBER, WISCHNEWSKI
SAID IMMEDIATELY AND WITHOUT EQUIVOCATION THAT IT WOULD
BE THE PRESENT MINISTER OF FINANCE, HANS APEL.
STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BONN00303
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780011-0557
Format: TEL
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780193/aaaadanx.tel
Line Count: 72
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 629c01e6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 aug 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3820119
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MINISTER OF STATE WISCHNEWSKI COMMENTS ON COMING CABINET CHANGES IN FRG
TAGS: PGOV, GE, STATE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/629c01e6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014